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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8395
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 0027
RUEHTB/USOFFICE FSC BANGKOK PRIORITY 0223
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEASRB/COMUSARCENT-CDRUSATHIRD FT MCPHERSON GA
RHMFIISS/USCENTAF SHAW AFB SC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000600

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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STATE FOR USAID/OFDA, AID/W, NEA/ARP, M/FM/PAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AMGT ASEC CASC KSAC KHLS MOPS SENV MU

SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION: CYCLONE GONU

REF: A. MUSCAT 576
1B. MUSCAT 590
1C. MUSCAT 586
1D. MUSCAT 581

11. This is an action cable. See paragraphs 5 and 6.

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Cyclone Gonu: Extent of Damage
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12. On June 6, Cyclone Gonu hit the coastal areas of northern and central Oman with high winds and rain. The resultant flooding caused significant damage to personal property and the country's infrastructure (ref A & B). As of June 11, many parts of the coast and Muscat still were without electricity or running water, and roads leading to isolated areas along the coast, as well as those in the capital area, remained blocked by water and mud (ref B). Large segments of the population report continuing shortages of safe drinking water. The government is concerned that standing water and damaged sewage and water supply lines may contribute to disease. The official death toll is 49, with 27 reported missing, although authorities expect the number to increase significantly as relief workers remove mud, rocks and water from the worst affected areas. Poor Omanis and expatriate workers, many of whom lived in low-lying areas in the path of flood waters, were hit particularly hard (ref C).

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Relief Response
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13. Government agencies, as well as Omani non-governmental organizations and loose networks of private citizens, have been distributing aid to distressed populations. Demand for emergency assistance, however, including food, water, housing, and clothing, far exceeds the government's current capacity to supply it. On June 12, Sultan Qaboos announced that the government had established a donation fund through the Oman Charitable Organization (OCO), the government-affiliated agency with primary responsibility for the government's relief efforts (ref B). The Sultan called on people to donate to the fund, which has initial commitments totaling seven million Omani Riyal (OR) (USD 18.2 million). According to local press, the fund will be used for general relief, and to help residents rebuild or replace

damaged property and possessions. The OCO has set up a committee chaired by the Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Engineer Salim al-Ghattami, to accept and review applications for property damage assistance.

¶4. (SBU) The government had earlier declared that it would not accept foreign aid, and had politely declined repeated U.S. offers to provide Oman with technical, equipment and monetary assistance (ref D). The Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Yousef bin Allawi, informed the Ambassador on June 11, however, that the government now will accept U.S. financial contributions to the OCO's donation fund.

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Action Request: USD 50,000 in Emergency Relief Aid
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¶5. Given the extent of the storm's damage as described in Post reporting and open sources, and the demand for immediate assistance to meet the population's food, water and lodging needs, I am exercising my disaster assistance authority as set forth in 2 FAM 061-63, and request USD 50,000 in emergency relief aid. Post will donate the money to the OCO's fund, for use in providing general relief, including food and water, to affected populations.

¶6. Post appreciates OFDA assistance and requests a fund cite be sent to Embassy Muscat as soon as possible.

GRAPPO